

MINUTES
UTAH CONSERVATION COMMISSION (UCC) MEETING
Regular Meeting, September 24, 2015
Location, Salt Lake City, UT

ATTENDANCE:

LuAnn Adams, *Commissioner, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF), Standing UCC Chair*

Appointed Conservation District (CD) Supervisor
UCC Voting Members:

Spencer Holmgren, *Zone 1*

Doug Bateman, *Zone 2*

Sid Smart, *Zone 3*

Don Probert, *Zone 4*

Allen Henrie, *Zone 5*

Jon Wilde, *Zone 6,*

Joe Begay, *Zone 7*

Standing Ex-Officio UCC Voting Members:

Bob Barry, *President, Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD)*

Aaron Eagar, *Utah Weed Supervisor Association President*

Teryl Roper, *UT State University Extension (USU)*

Walt Baker, *Director, Water Quality Division, Utah Department of Environmental Quality*

Kim Christy, *for Kevin Carter, Director, Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration*

Commission Members Absent:

Lowell Braxton, *Vice Chair, State Grazing Advisory Board*

Mike Styler, *Director, Utah Department of Natural Resources*

Jay Tanner, *Chair, State Grazing Advisory Board*

Alternate UCC Members (Non-voting):

Larry Hartley, *Zone 3*

Bill Butcher, *Zone 7*

Conservation Partners Representatives:

Kristy Davis, *UACD Executive Vice President*

David Brown, *State Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service*

Dave Whittekiend, *USDA Forest Service*

Jenna Whitlock, *Director, Bureau of Land Management*

Department of Agriculture and Food:

Scott Ericson, *Deputy Commissioner*

R. J. Spencer, *Deputy Director, Plant Industry & Conservation*

Sherie Edginton, *UCC Assistant*

Bracken Henderson, *Zone 1, Resource Coordinator*, via conference call

Daniel Gunnell, *Zone 3 Resource Coordinator*, via conference call

Tracy Balch, *Zone 4 Resource Coordinator*, via conference call

Tyce Palmer, *Zone 5 Resource Coordinator*, via conference call

Darrell Gillman, *Zone 6 Resource Coordinator*, via conference call

Roger Barton, *Zone 7, Resource Coordinator*, via conference call

Jay Olsen, *Environmental Specialist ACES Program*

Roberta Valdez, *ARDL Loan Specialist*

Karen Rhynsbarger, *ARDL Loan Specialist*

Troy Forrest, *State Coordinator, GIP Program*

Guests:

Bartly Mathews, *Office of Energy Development*

Wendell Stenbridge, *UACD Past President*

Carl Adams, *Division of Water Quality*

RaNae Wilde

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION ACTION

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| 1. | <u>Meeting Minutes for the May 27 2015.</u> | <u>Page 2</u> |
| 2. | <u>Agenda Change</u> | <u>Page 2</u> |
| 3. | <u>ARDL Loan Approval</u> | <u>Page 3</u> |
| 4. | <u>Disposal of Foreclosure Property</u> | <u>Page 3</u> |

UCC MEETING - CALL TO ORDER

Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Utah Conservation Commission (UCC) Chairman, Commissioner LuAnn Adams called the meeting to order at 8:08 AM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Adams indicated that the May 27, 2015 meeting minutes draft was distributed electronically, and to some people by hard copy with this meeting notice. She asked for action on these minutes. **A motion was made by Mr. Doug Bateman to approve the May 27, 2015 meeting minutes and was seconded by Mr. Spencer Holmgren. The motion carried unanimously.**

AGENDA CHANGE

Commissioner Adams asked that the agenda be changed. The Air Quality Issues were taken off the agenda, and R. J. Spencer will be presenting the salinity report. **A motion to amend the agenda was made by Mr. Allen Henrie and was seconded by Mr. Bob Barry. The motion carried unanimously.**

SALINITY

Mr. R. J. Spencer, Deputy Director, Plant Industry and Conservation, reported Utah Department of Agriculture and Food has been authorized to enter into agreements for two irrigation improvement projects: Rock Point Canal Company in Vernal Utah, will install 4.8 miles of pipe to eliminate 8.7 miles of unlined canal, this will retain 740 tons of salt per year. The basin States Program is funds are \$976,549. The project will be completed in two years. The Antelope and North Laterals for Sheep Creek Irrigation Company in Manila Utah, 12,000 feet of pipe will be placed at the Antelope lateral, which is now an unlined canal. 10,000 feet of pipe will be placed at the North lateral which is currently unlined. This project will retain 1,474 tons of salt per year and will take two years to complete.

Currently the Coalmine Offset Salinity Control Program fund has \$1,629,044.14. The majority of these funds originated from the Muddy Creek area near Emery Utah. They anticipate solicitation for proposals next spring for salt retention projects.

ISM SUCCESS

Mr. Rich Riding, ISM Program Manager, reported on the Invasive Species Mitigation Program. The goals for success of the program is; early detection and treatment of controllable populations. One success is control of square nose knapweed in the Tintic area. They are in the fourth year of the project and have 98% control of the species. In areas that cannot be treated with chemicals, they have used biological control. There have been 124 projects over the last three years in all 29 counties of the state, and have treated 21 different invasive species.

BIG HORN SHEEP

Mr. Dave Wittekiend, USDA Forest Supervisor, reported they are working on updating allotment plans on the Cache-Wasatch National Forests. After a litigation of the NEPA portion of the allotment plans, they changed the plans to address the impact of domestic sheep grazing on the allotments. There are five allotments in the Uintah Wilderness areas. They decided to include the five allotments on the Ashley National Forests in the new plans. These modeling processes will evaluate the probabilities of domestic sheep passing diseases to the big horn sheep in the area. There are some allotments that have both domestic and big horn sheep on the same allotment. The Forest Service is more concerned with the effects grazing has on the wilderness areas. The Forest Service wants to maintain the grazing on the allotments on both the Cache-Wasatch and Ashley National Forests. It will take a year and a half to collect data on impacts on the allotments, so they can finish the plans.

It was asked if the decision to not list Sage Grouse will affect grazing allotments on forest land. The Forest Service will spend the next several months studying where Sage Grouse are, and where the grazing allotments are and if they intersect each other. Then changes will be made according to the findings.

WATERS OF THE U.S.

Ms. Melissa Ure, Policy Analyst, reported the Waters of the U.S. rule was signed and has been implemented as of August 28, 2015. She handed out a summary of the rule and contact information for EPA. Utah will most likely file a lawsuit against the rule. This should not have too much effect on how Utah handles water quality issues.

AGRICULTURE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT LOANS (ARDL) REPORT

Ms. Roberta Valdez, ARDL Loan Specialist, reported on the ARDL program status as of August 31, 2015.

ARDL Bank Account	\$500,293
Investment Account	\$11,788,041
Cash Total	\$12,288,334
Undisbursed Loans	\$494,366
Loan Applications in Process	\$2,151,277
Zone Allocations	\$9,425,935
Applications & Zone Funds Total	\$11,577,212
Net Cash Position	\$216,756
Legislative Appropriation	\$22,787,399
Principal Balance of Loans	\$17,228,917
Undisbursed Funds	\$494,366
Total	\$17,723,283
Contracted Loans	451
Active Applications	24
Average Contracted Loan Size	\$39,298
Loans 30 Days Past Due	7
Principal Repayments Year to Date	\$64,864
Interest Payments	\$9,763
Penalty Payments	\$361
Total	\$74,989
Loans Paid Off	2
New Loans	3
Average New Loan Size	\$55,716
TA Fees Paid Year to Date	\$6,429

Ms. Valdez report on a loan for Gibbons Brothers Holdings, LLC, Lewiston UT. The new loan amount is \$624,000 which will be added to existing loans totaling \$1,095,585.15. The purpose of the loan is to build a waste water storage facility and waste separator facility which allows better control of run-off and longer manure storage during winter months; improving waste management to EPA standards. **A motion to approve the loan was made by Mr. Allen Henrie, and it was seconded by Mr. Joe Begay. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Valdez reported on a foreclosure in Washington County. ARDL now has the water rights and trust deed changed to UDAF. The land is worth \$40,000 according to an appraisal completed January 2014. If the property is sold, UDAF could lose up to \$25,000. It was suggested to sell the property at the next SITLA auction. **A motion was made to dispose of the property by Mr. Teryl Roper, and seconded by Mr. Spencer Holmgren. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Valdez is concerned that some projects are being started before the ARDL loans are being approved. Policy states not to start the projects before the loan is approved. There needs to be training for the Resource Coordinators and planners so they know not to start the project until funding is in place.

NRCS REPORT

Mr. David Brown, State Conservationist, Natural Resource Conservation Service, reported the 2015 federal budget years ends September 30. The 2016 budget will be adequate; they will make adjustments as needed. There is the potential shutdown of the federal government October 1. There is funding from the 2015 budget for the UDAF planners through May, he will work to fund the planners through the remainder of the 2016 fiscal year.

Project sign up cutoff for EQIP will be mid-November. Decisions on projects will be made in early spring. The Sage Grouse funding will continue. Most of the funds in Utah are used for pinion juniper removal. He updated the Commission on the Regional Conservation Program, which allows partnership for projects; there were 2 projects funded. Local Work Groups will be meeting in January and February. The strategic proposal process helps local work groups decide on projects around the state. Each year there are more high quality projects being funded because of this process. Utah has not participated yet in the multi-state RCPP project opportunities.

UACD REPORT

Mr. Bob Barry, UACD President, invited everyone to attend the Southwest and Pacific NACD Convention in Park City in October. He asked the zones to plan when they will be holding their zone meetings. He asked if the UCC would like to change the CD election process. He would like to have a monthly phone conference with the Commissioner.

UCC BUSINESS

Mr. R. J. Spencer reported 37 employees were brought over from UACD to UDAF, under the UCC, with the same salaries and a 2.25% increase as of June 29, 2015. The Resource Coordinators and R. J. will be holding bi-weekly phone conferences. There are now four positions that need to be filled. He is meeting with Human Resources to fill these positions.

Mr. Spencer reported the code might need to be change to include a more precise description of what an agriculture producer is. Utah code specifies that three of the five CD supervisors must be agriculture producers. It is harder to find agriculture producers along the Wasatch Front. A private land operator is mentioned in the code but it is a very broad definition.

Mr. Spencer reported that not all of the CD nomination forms have come in yet. He asked the board to make sure they are all in no later than October 1.

Mr. Daniel Gunnell, Zone 3 Resource Coordinator, reported the 2016 Conservation Field Day will most likely be held in Utah County. There are several different tour opportunities they are discussing. More information will be coming.

Mr. Spencer reported they are working through some travel funding holes for the UCC employees. Those holes will be covered in the 2017 budget.

CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

1. UCC Meeting: November 4, 2015, at St George
2. UACD Annual Convention: November 5-6, at St George

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned 11:29 AM PM